



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

March 7, 2016

To: Senator Steve Cassano, Co-Chair
Representative Ed Jutila, Co-Chair
Members of the Government Administration & Elections Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **Support for HB 5500, AA Requiring the Suspension of Administrative Penalties Imposed on Certain Business Entities**

The HBRA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with about eight hundred (800) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of CT's citizens. Our members, all small businesses, are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry and to consumers. We build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year and engage in countless home remodeling projects.

The HBRA of Connecticut supports HB 5500. This bill is identical to HB 5431 from the 2014 session. That bill passed the GAE Committee unanimously, passed Judiciary 34-7 and passed the House 120-21, but died on the Senate calendar.

Our members must often obtain, and of course comply with, a variety of state agency permits in order to pursue housing development. Depending on the particular community that is to be built, our members need permits or other regulatory approvals from DEEP (variety of environmental permits), DPH (water and sewage treatment), DOT (STC approvals), DECD (state housing assistance), DAS (building and fire codes) and OPM (state plan of conservation and development, Incentive Housing program). Our businesses are also regulated by DCP (contractor licenses and registration programs) and, of course, DRS (taxes).

Often, the regulations with which we must comply and the permits themselves issued pursuant to regulations are lengthy and complex. **Many businesses, especially small businesses that do not have teams of lawyers, engineers and regulatory compliance staff, need education about regulatory and permit requirements more than regulatory commands and controls.** For first-time violators who take remedial measures to completely correct violations, state agencies should treat the occurrence as a "teaching moment" without penalizing the offender. This is a reasonable, rational approach that will improve the relationship between state agencies and the regulated community. It will help to revive CT as a good place to do business.

We urge you to support HB 5500 and help further improve the regulatory environment in Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this important topic.

Vision: "Building CT's Economy, Communities and Better Lives One Home at a Time"
Mission: "Using Effective Advocacy and New Knowledge to Solve Our Member's Problems."